



1. Please provide up-to-date information about general aspects of treatment of homosexuals in India and Sikhs/homosexuality/relocation of homosexual Sikhs.

In July 2009, the Delhi High Court overturned a portion of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code which prohibited same-sex relations.¹ Private groups and individuals have challenged this ruling in the Supreme Court, but this matter remains pending at the time of writing.² While the Delhi High Court ruling was thought likely to have influence across India,³ in January 2012 a magistrate's court in Mumbai rejected an application to dismiss a charge under Section 377 against a man for having "unnatural sex" with another man.⁴ Homosexuals in India continue to be subject to various forms of mistreatment, including harassment, violence and issues with accessing employment.⁵ There are reports which indicate that the level of police harassment has dropped,⁶ although there is also information available which refers to it continuing.⁷

No reports were located which make specific reference to the treatment of homosexual Sikhs in India. The religious text of Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib, is silent on the subject of homosexuality, but repeatedly encourages marriage between a man and a woman. This has resulted in differing interpretations of Sikhism's position on homosexuality.⁸ Two major Sikh bodies, the Akal Takht and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), have

¹ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

² US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6; RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December; Rao, M. 2012, 'Sec 377 ruling fails to get gay man reprieve in court', *Hindustan Times*, 9 January <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Mumbai/Sec-377-ruling-fails-to-get-gay-man-reprieve-in-court/Article1-793380.aspx> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

³ Human Rights Watch 2009, *Court Strikes Down 'Sodomy' Law*, 2 July <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/07/02/india-court-strikes-down-sodomy-law> – Accessed 12 December 2011.

⁴ Rao, M. 2012, 'Sec 377 ruling fails to get gay man reprieve in court', *Hindustan Times*, 9 January <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Mumbai/Sec-377-ruling-fails-to-get-gay-man-reprieve-in-court/Article1-793380.aspx> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

⁵ Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World – India*, 26 May; US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6; Sethi, A. 2012, 'LGBT say they are harassed by society, denied employment, seek justice', *Deccan Herald*, 6 January <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/217354/lgbt-say-they-harassed-society.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012; RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December.

⁶ 'Pink India tiptoes out of the closet' 2010, *The Times of India*, 3 July; Yan, D. 2010, 'India gays celebrate 1 year since landmark verdict', *Associated Press*, 3 July; RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December.

⁷ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6; Sethi, A. 2012, 'LGBT say they are harassed by society, denied employment, seek justice', *Deccan Herald*, 6 January <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/217354/lgbt-say-they-harassed-society.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012.

⁸ 'What are Sikhism's beliefs on homosexuality?' (undated), RealSikhism website <http://realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1250025034&ucat=7> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

expressed strong opposition to homosexuality.⁹ Contrasting information has been located in relation to the level of acceptance, and the level of opposition, to homosexuality within the Sikh community.¹⁰

No reports were located which make specific reference to homosexuals relocating from one part of India to another. There is information available indicating that there is a higher level of acceptance of homosexuals in urban areas of India as opposed to rural areas,¹¹ with Delhi in particular being cited as a centre for gay culture in that country.¹² However, there is information which indicates that public displays of affection between gay couples can still be met with disapproval in urban areas,¹³ with reports available which refer to homosexuals being subject to mistreatment in Calcutta and Hyderabad.¹⁴

Treatment of Homosexuals in India

In July 2009, the Delhi High Court overturned a portion of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code which prohibited same-sex relations. This law had previously been “used to target, harass, and punish lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons.”¹⁵ The Indian government decided not to oppose this ruling, although it was subsequently challenged in the Supreme Court by “a few groups and individuals”. The Supreme Court had not rendered a judgment on this matter by the end of 2010.¹⁶ Question 1 of *Country Advice IND39663* (completed on 16 December 2011) provides information indicating that hearings on the matter were deferred in April and then again in November, meaning that the Supreme Court had yet to issue a verdict.¹⁷ A January 2012 article from the *Hindustan Times* reported that the matter before the Supreme Court was still pending.¹⁸

At the time of the Delhi High Court decision, Human Rights Watch stated that “[w]hile the ruling applies to New Delhi, it is likely to influence the legal establishment across the

⁹ ‘Akali Takht, SGPC disapprove Delhi HC judgement on homosexuality’ 2009, *Hindustan Times*, 2 July <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/427913.aspx> – Accessed 9 January 2012; Rana, Y. 2009, ‘Akali Takht bars gay marriages in gurdwaras’, *The Times of India*, 9 July http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-07-09/india/28196511_1_gay-marriages-first-gay-couple-sikh-high-priests – Accessed 9 January 2012; ‘Religious leaders condemn court ruling on sex’ 2009, *Deccan Herald*, source: *Press Trust of India*, 11 July <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/12733/tv-talk.html> – Accessed 9 January 2012.

¹⁰ ‘Homosexuality and Sikhism’ (undated), Religion Facts website <http://www.religionfacts.com/homosexuality/sikhism.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007; ‘Sikhs: Sexual Health’ (undated), Ethnicity Online website http://www.ethnicityonline.net/sikh_sexual_health.htm – Accessed 10 May 2006.

¹¹ RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December; US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6; Sarkar, S. 2011, ‘No shame in same’, *The Telegraph*, 4 September http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110904/jsp/7days/story_14461440.jsp – Accessed 10 January 2012.

¹² RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December.

¹³ ‘India’s homosexuals romance in toilets, stores’ 2011, *Deccan Herald*, source: *Indo-Asian News Service*, 5 February <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/134978/indias-homosexuals-romance-toilets-stores.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012.

¹⁴ Banerjee, P. 2011, ‘Silence please’, *The Telegraph*, 3 July http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110703/jsp/calcutta/story_14191005.jsp – Accessed 10 January 2012; ‘City colleges turn homophobic?’ 2011, *The Times of India*, 20 June http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-20/hyderabad/29679047_1_gay-students-college-management-engineering-college – Accessed 11 January 2012.

¹⁵ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

¹⁶ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

¹⁷ RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December.

¹⁸ Rao, M. 2012, ‘Sec 377 ruling fails to get gay man reprieve in court’, *Hindustan Times*, 9 January <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Mumbai/Sec-377-ruling-fails-to-get-gay-man-reprieve-in-court/Article1-793380.aspx> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

nation”.¹⁹ However, in January 2012, a magistrate’s court in Girgaum, Mumbai, rejected an application to dismiss a charge under Section 377 against a man for having “unnatural sex” with another man. The applicant’s lawyers cited the July 2009 Delhi High Court ruling in support of their case, but the magistrate found that Section 377 was “still alive in statute” and allowed the charge to stand. The applicant’s lawyers announced their intention to appeal this decision in the higher courts, stating that “[t]he Delhi high court judgment has held that gay sex amounts to an offence only if it involves a minor victim”. They also noted that the Supreme Court had not granted a stay on the Delhi High Court’s order.²⁰

LGBT groups are active across India, sponsoring range of events and activities which include “rallies, gay pride marches, film series, and speeches”.²¹ Freedom House states these groups are subject to “harassment and occasional violence”,²² while the US Department of State reports that during 2010 “they faced discrimination and violence in many areas of society, particularly in rural areas.”²³ The US Department of State refers to activists’ reports of some employers firing LGBT persons who did not hide their sexual orientation, while the US Department of State also reports that LGBT persons “faced physical attacks, rape, and blackmail” during 2010.²⁴ In July 2011, India’s health minister Ghulam Nabi Azad referred to homosexuality as an “unnatural disease” from the west during a HIV/AIDS conference in New Delhi.²⁵

There is contrasting information available regarding the recent treatment of homosexuals by Indian security forces. The US Department of State reported that during 2010 “[s]ome police committed crimes against LGBT persons and used the threat of arrest to coerce victims not to report the incidents, although several states, with the aid of NGOs, had police education and sensitivity trainings.”²⁶ On the other hand, a July 2010 report from *The Times of India* quotes a gay right activist from Pune as stating that “[p]olice harassment has dropped” and that “[t]hey are more co-operative and understanding, and even suggest we contact them if we have a problem”.²⁷ Another July 2010 report from the *Associated Press* refers to events held by the gay communities in Mumbai, New Delhi, Calcutta and Bangalore to mark the one year anniversary of the aforementioned Delhi High Court ruling. The organiser of the event in Mumbai stated that the ruling had “reduced incidents of police harassment”.²⁸ Question 3 of *Country Advice IND39663* refers to reports which suggest that, whilst some Indian police have committed crimes against sexual minorities, police harassment of homosexuals generally declined after the Delhi High Court ruling.²⁹ However, a *Deccan Herald* report from January 2012 referred to claims by members of Mitra, “a community based organisation

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch 2009, *Court Strikes Down ‘Sodomy’ Law*, 2 July <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/07/02/india-court-strikes-down-sodomy-law> – Accessed 12 December 2011.

²⁰ Rao, M. 2012, ‘Sec 377 ruling fails to get gay man reprieve in court’, *Hindustan Times*, 9 January <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Mumbai/Sec-377-ruling-fails-to-get-gay-man-reprieve-in-court/Article1-793380.aspx> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

²¹ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

²² Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World – India*, 26 May.

²³ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

²⁴ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

²⁵ ‘Indian health minister under fire for homosexuality remarks’ 2011, *Associated Press*, 5 July.

²⁶ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

²⁷ ‘Pink India tiptoes out of the closet’ 2010, *The Times of India*, 3 July.

²⁸ Yan, D. 2010, ‘India gays celebrate 1 year since landmark verdict’, *Associated Press*, 3 July.

²⁹ RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December. For the relevant reports, see US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6; ‘Pink India tiptoes out of the closet’ 2010, *The Times of India*, 3 July; Wade, M. 2010, ‘India’s gays happy to remain in the closet’, *The Age*, 20 March <http://www.theage.com.au/world/indias-gays-happy-to-remain-in-the-closet-20100319-qm69.html> – Accessed 19 August 2010.

of men who have sex with men (MSMs) and transgender people”, that they were still not being accepted by society. The report indicated that Mitra members, which reportedly number “close to 20,000” in Delhi, continued to be subject to harassment from police and members of the public. These members considered that “society’s perception has changed over the years but it has been slow progress.” The article provides an example of a man who was beaten up by a group of boys and then approached the police to have a First Information Report (FIR) filed in relation to the incident. The police did not file the FIR, but instead “abused him and said he deserved to be beaten up because he was homosexual”. The FIR was only filed after Mitra approached the police in relation to this case.³⁰

Question 5 of *Country Advice IND39663* refers to sources which report that homosexuals face employment discrimination across India. Homosexuals may experience discrimination in hiring, promotion, assignment of work duties, compensation and termination, as well as various forms of harassment. Some employers have reportedly fired gay men who do not hide their sexual orientation, although specific examples were not located to describe where and in which industries this is most prevalent. In 2011, the organisers of a public celebration in Delhi to mark the second anniversary of the Delhi High Court decision regarding Section 377 distributed a pamphlet which called for an end to employment discrimination.³¹ The aforementioned January 2012 *Deccan Herald* report refers to claims from Mitra members that they were denied employment “because employers are uncomfortable with their social identities.”³²

Sikhism and Homosexuality

According to the RealSikhism website,³³ the theoretical position of Sikhism in relation to homosexuality is unclear, as the Guru Granth Sahib, the religious text of Sikhism, provides “no specific teachings” in relation to homosexuality. This text does, however, repeatedly encourage married life. When marriage is mentioned in this text, the form of marriage referred to is between a man and a woman. The Guru Granth Sahib’s silence on the subject of homosexuality, and the information it provides in relation to marriage, has resulted in differing interpretations of Sikhism’s attitude to homosexuality:

Some Sikhs believe that if a marriage between two of the same sexes is not mentioned, it is therefore not right. The counterargument is that, marriage is mentioned as a spiritual unity and since the soul does not have a gender, homosexuality should be permitted. The counterargument again arises that spiritual unity in marriage is only mentioned between a man and a woman. Since sexuality with the same gender is not directly mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Sikhism’s stand on homosexuality is derived from other beliefs such as marriage and sex.³⁴

³⁰ Sethi, A. 2012, ‘LGBT say they are harassed by society, denied employment, seek justice’, *Deccan Herald*, 6 January <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/217354/lgbt-say-they-harassed-society.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012.

³¹ RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December.

³² Sethi, A. 2012, ‘LGBT say they are harassed by society, denied employment, seek justice’, *Deccan Herald*, 6 January <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/217354/lgbt-say-they-harassed-society.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012.

³³ The RealSikhism website is a website which provides general information about Sikhism: see ‘About Us’ (undated), RealSikhism website <http://www.realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1192339326&ucat=11> – Accessed 12 January 2012.

³⁴ ‘What are Sikhism’s beliefs on homosexuality?’ (undated), RealSikhism website <http://realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1250025034&ucat=7> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

The same source states that “Sikhism does not hate or believe that homosexuals are damned to hell”, and that “[h]omosexuals are free to attend the Gurdwara Sahib and participate in church services.” In addition, it indicates that sexuality is not a major issue in Sikhism:

Sikhism is more concerned with ones attainment of enlightenment rather than habitual desires such as sexuality. Views on homosexuality tend not to be a primary concern in Sikh teachings, as the universal goal is to overcome sexual desires all together. Sikhs are not to have hate or animosity to any person, regardless of race, caste, color, creed, gender, or sexuality.³⁵

Despite this theoretical position, the major Sikh bodies in India have expressed strong opposition to homosexuality. In response to the July 2009 Delhi High Court ruling, Sikh clergy reportedly described homosexuality as being “against nature”.³⁶ The judgment was disapproved by the Akal Takht, “the highest temporal body of Sikhs”, and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), which is responsible for “managing key Sikh shrines”. The head of Akal Takht reportedly told the *Press Trust of India* that “[t]his is against the law of nature and the Gurmukh Sedant (sikh principles). We will appeal to the Sikhs not to follow this unnatural thing (gay sex)”.³⁷ The Akal Takht also issued directions barring gay marriages taking place in gurdwaras.³⁸ Later that same month, a member of the Delhi SGPC stated that “gay activities should not be encouraged as it is against the law of nature”, although he also claimed that “Sikhism does not treat homosexuals as criminal.”³⁹

Contrasting information has been located in relation to the level of acceptance, and the level of opposition, to homosexuality within the Sikh community. The ReligionFacts website⁴⁰ provides information indicating that, while some Sikhs are tolerant towards homosexuality, this is a minority view, with many interpreting the Guru Granth Sahib as having a negative attitude towards homosexuality:

There are five vices outlined in the Guru Granth Sahib that are to be avoided by Sikhs. These vices are called the Five Thieves. They are Pride (a’Hankar), Anger (Kr’odh), Greed (Lob’H), Attachment (Mo’H), and Lust (K’haam). Many Sikhs believe that homosexual thoughts and behaviour are just manifestations of lust, and that it is therefore forbidden.

However, other Sikhs believe that Guru Nanak’s emphasis on universal equality and brotherhood is fundamentally in support of gay rights. This view is held by a minority of Sikhs, many of whom have been born/raised in countries that are more tolerant towards homosexuality. Some Sikhs have even gone so far as to describe

³⁵ ‘What are Sikhism’s beliefs on homosexuality?’ (undated), RealSikhism website

<http://realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1250025034&ucat=7> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

³⁶ Paul, C. 2009, ‘Religions unite against ruling’, *The Telegraph*, 3 July

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090703/jsp/nation/story_11190833.jsp – Accessed 9 January 2012.

³⁷ ‘Akal Takht, SGPC disapprove Delhi HC judgement on homosexuality’ 2009, *Hindustan Times*, source: *Press Trust of India*, 2 July <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/427913.aspx> – Accessed 9 January 2012.

³⁸ Rana, Y. 2009, ‘Akal Takht bars gay marriages in gurdwaras’, *The Times of India*, 9 July

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-07-09/india/28196511_1_gay-marriages-first-gay-couple-sikh-high-priests – Accessed 9 January 2012.

³⁹ ‘Religious leaders condemn court ruling on sex’ 2009, *Deccan Herald*, source: *Press Trust of India*, 11 July <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/12733/tv-talk.html> – Accessed 9 January 2012.

⁴⁰ The ReligionFacts website states that its aim is “to provide “just the facts” on the world’s religions and topics of religious interest” and “provide useful and interesting information on religion in an accessible format”: ‘About Us’ (undated), ReligionFacts website <http://www.religionfacts.com/about.htm> – Accessed 12 January 2012.

homosexuals as "the new Untouchables" in reference to Sikhism's rejection of the Indian caste system.⁴¹

However, information on the Ethnicity Online website⁴² provides the following information which indicates that most Sikhs are "very tolerant of homosexuality":

Sikhism is a very tolerant religion and seeks to find the truth rather than adhere rigidly to rules. Homosexuality is not specifically banned in any of the writings of the Gurus, but they do stress that God has intended people to live as man and wife, or to be celibate, with no deviation from this design. This ambivalence allows most Sikhs to be very tolerant of homosexuality and accept a homosexual individual while still regarding the practice as against God's design.⁴³

No reports were located which make specific reference to the treatment of homosexual Sikhs in India. Two *BBC News* reports were located which refer to the April 2011 murder of two lesbians in Haryana, a state with a significant concentration of Sikhs (see information in the following section). However, these reports do not specify whether the murdered women were Sikhs, or if their murderer was a Sikh.⁴⁴

Relocation of Homosexuals in India

No reports were located which make specific reference to homosexuals relocating from one part of India to another. *BBC News* has described Punjab, along with Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, as "deeply conservative and patriarchal regions".⁴⁵ Of the 14 million Sikhs living in India, 60 per cent are concentrated in Punjab, with other significant Sikh concentrations in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Delhi.⁴⁶ According to the US Department of State, Indian law "provides for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation". They reported that, during 2010, "the government generally respected these rights in practice."⁴⁷

There is information available indicating that there is a higher level of acceptance of homosexuals in urban areas of India as opposed to rural areas. As noted earlier, the US Department of State has reported that during 2010 LGBT groups "faced discrimination and violence in many areas of society, particularly in rural areas."⁴⁸ Question 4 of *Country Advice IND39663* indicates that several sources cite Delhi as a centre for Indian gay culture, although there is a duality in reporting whereby homosexuality is increasingly accepted in India's urban centres but still significantly stigmatised. In addition, this advice indicates that many gay men hide their sexual orientation; this is particularly so in regional areas.⁴⁹ A September 2011 report from the Calcutta-based newspaper *The Telegraph* provides the following

⁴¹ 'Homosexuality and Sikhism' (undated), Religion Facts website <http://www.religionfacts.com/homosexuality/sikhism.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007.

⁴² The Ethnicity Online website is an online resource created by the University of Cambridge's School of Clinical Medicine "to help broaden awareness of the needs of ethnic groups using healthcare services... as well as the needs of healthcare": 'Welcome' (undated), Ethnicity Online website <http://www.ethnicityonline.net/> – Accessed 12 January 2012.

⁴³ 'Sikhs: Sexual Health' (undated), Ethnicity Online website http://www.ethnicityonline.net/sikh_sexual_health.htm – Accessed 10 May 2006.

⁴⁴ 'Haryana widows battered to death' 2011, *BBC News*, 19 April; 'India court calls for 'stamping out honour killing' 2011, *BBC News*, 20 April.

⁴⁵ 'India court calls for 'stamping out honour killing' 2011, *BBC News*, 20 April.

⁴⁶ Minority Rights Group International 2008, *Sikhs*, December.

⁴⁷ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 2.d.

⁴⁸ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April, Section 6.

⁴⁹ RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December.

information which refers to homosexual relationships having become more visible in urban areas of India:

“A sexual revolution is happening in urban India,” says Gaurai Uddanwadikar, head of Counseling India, a psychotherapy clinic in Bangalore. “There is more openness and less inhibition about sex in general. So homosexual relationships are also becoming more common.”⁵⁰

A July 2011 report from *The Times of India* provides an example of homosexuality being more prominent in urban areas. It refers to the emergence of “at least half-a-dozen gay clubs” in engineering, medical and journalism colleges in Chennai, “mostly for students to seek protection and share experiences.” A student at Sai Ram Engineering College reportedly began a gay club at his college “when the teasing from classmates about his effeminate mannerisms got too much.” While the emergence of these college gay clubs in the city was a novel development, the report noted that “gay organisations are not new in Chennai”. Both Delhi and Mumbai were also reported to have “several college queer clubs”.⁵¹

However, there is information which indicates that the mistreatment of homosexuals does occur in urban areas of India. A February 2011 *Indo-Asian News Service* (IANS) report cites a gay activist who expressed the view that the sight of two men showing mutual affection in a public space could be met with disapproval, and that in cities it was harder for gay couples to find spaces where they could do this.⁵² In addition, a July 2011 report from *The Telegraph* provides pertinent information regarding the situation of the homosexual community of Calcutta. While it is indicated that there has been a marginal improvement in their situation in Calcutta since the July 2009 Delhi High Court ruling, it is stated that “the verdict has made no difference in the daily lives of the gay community”, with homosexual relationships still having to be pursued in secret.⁵³ A June 2011 report from *The Times of India* also refers to “at least half a dozen gay students” being asked to leave colleges in Hyderabad during the 2010-2011 academic year. This occurred “allegedly because the educational institutions were uncomfortable with their student's alternate sexuality”. One student claimed that he was asked to leave his college after he was outed on a social networking site, and that he had been beaten up by classmates and denied protection from the university.⁵⁴

An *Indo-Asian News Service* (IANS) article, published on 2 July 2011, provides information which refers to the lesser level of acceptance of homosexuality in rural areas. It refers to a statement by an attendee at a forum organised by the Naz Foundation, a HIV awareness non-profit group,⁵⁵ that “[e]ven uttering the word homosexual or lesbian is taboo in small towns of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh” and “often leads to social ostracisation”.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Sarkar, S. 2011, ‘No shame in same’, *The Telegraph*, 4 September

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110904/jsp/7days/story_14461440.jsp – Accessed 10 January 2012.

⁵¹ Vasundara, R. 2011, ‘Clubs for gays spring up on city campuses’, *The Times of India*, 25 July.

⁵² ‘India’s homosexuals romance in toilets, stores’ 2011, *Deccan Herald*, source: *Indo-Asian News Service*, 5 February <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/134978/indias-homosexuals-romance-toilets-stores.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012.

⁵³ Banerjee, P. 2011, ‘Silence please’, *The Telegraph*, 3 July

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110703/jsp/calcutta/story_14191005.jsp – Accessed 10 January 2012.

⁵⁴ ‘City colleges turn homophobic?’ 2011, *The Times of India*, 20 June

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-20/hyderabad/29679047_1_gay-students-college-management-engineering-college – Accessed 11 January 2012.

⁵⁵ Sheth, N. & Bellman, E. 2009, ‘Indian court strikes down homosexuality ban’, *Wall Street Journal*, 3 July.

⁵⁶ ‘Campaigning for gay rights with Hillary Clinton’ 2011, *Indo-Asian News Service*, 2 July.

References

- 'About Us' (undated), RealSikhism website
<http://www.realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1192339326&ucat=11> – Accessed 12 January 2012.
- 'About Us' (undated), ReligionFacts website <http://www.religionfacts.com/about.htm> – Accessed 12 January 2012.
- 'Akal Takht, SGPC disapprove Delhi HC judgement on homosexuality' 2009, *Hindustan Times*, 2 July <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/427913.aspx> – Accessed 9 January 2012.
- Banerjee, P. 2011, 'Silence please', *The Telegraph*, 3 July
http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110703/jsp/calcutta/story_14191005.jsp – Accessed 10 January 2012.
- 'Campaigning for gay rights with Hillary Clinton' 2011, *Indo-Asian News Service*, 2 July. (CISNET India CX268141)
- 'City colleges turn homophobic?' 2011, *The Times of India*, 20 June
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-20/hyderabad/29679047_1_gay-students-college-management-engineering-college – Accessed 11 January 2012.
- Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World – India*, 26 May.
- 'Haryana widows battered to death' 2011, *BBC News*, 19 April. (CISNET India CX269181)
- 'Homosexuality and Sikhism' (undated), Religion Facts website
<http://www.religionfacts.com/homosexuality/sikhism.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007.
- Human Rights Watch 2009, *Court Strikes Down 'Sodomy' Law*, 2 July
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/07/02/india-court-strikes-down-sodomy-law> – Accessed 12 December 2011.
- 'India court calls for 'stamping out honour killing' 2011, *BBC News*, 20 April. (CISNET India CX272187)
- 'India's homosexuals romance in toilets, stores' 2011, *Deccan Herald*, source: *Indo-Asian News Service*, 5 February <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/134978/indias-homosexuals-romance-toilets-stores.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012.
- 'Indian health minister under fire for homosexuality remarks' 2011, *Associated Press*, 5 July. (CISNET India CX268230)
- Minority Rights Group International 2008, *Sikhs*, December. (CISNET India CX270681)
- Paul, C. 2009, 'Religions unite against ruling', *The Telegraph*, 3 July
http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090703/jsp/nation/story_11190833.jsp – Accessed 9 January 2012.
- 'Pink India tiptoes out of the closet' 2010, *The Times of India*, 3 July. (CISNET India CX247020)
- Rana, Y. 2009, 'Akal Takht bars gay marriages in gurdwaras', *The Times of India*, 9 July
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-07-09/india/28196511_1_gay-marriages-first-gay-couple-sikh-high-priests – Accessed 9 January 2012.

Rao, M. 2012, 'Sec 377 ruling fails to get gay man reprieve in court', *Hindustan Times*, 9 January <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Mumbai/Sec-377-ruling-fails-to-get-gay-man-reprieve-in-court/Article1-793380.aspx> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

'Religious leaders condemn court ruling on sex' 2009, *Deccan Herald*, source: *Press Trust of India*, 11 July <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/12733/tv-talk.html> – Accessed 9 January 2012.

RRT Country Advice 2011, *Country Advice IND39663*, 16 December.

Sarkar, S. 2011, 'No shame in same', *The Telegraph*, 4 September http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110904/jsp/7days/story_14461440.jsp – Accessed 10 January 2012.

Sethi, A. 2012, 'LGBT say they are harassed by society, denied employment, seek justice', *Deccan Herald*, 6 January <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/217354/lgbt-say-they-harassed-society.html> – Accessed 11 January 2012.

Sheth, N. & Bellman, E. 2009, 'Indian court strikes down homosexuality ban', *Wall Street Journal*, 3 July. (CISNET India CX272182)

'Sikhs: Sexual Health' (undated), Ethnicity Online website http://www.ethnicityonline.net/sikh_sexual_health.htm – Accessed 10 May 2006.

US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April.

Vasundara, R. 2011, 'Clubs for gays spring up on city campuses', *The Times of India*, 25 July. (CISNET India CX269316)

Wade, M. 2010, 'India's gays happy to remain in the closet', *The Age*, 20 March <http://www.theage.com.au/world/indias-gays-happy-to-remain-in-the-closet-20100319-qm69.html> – Accessed 19 August 2010.

'Welcome' (undated), Ethnicity Online website <http://www.ethnicityonline.net/> – Accessed 12 January 2012.

'What are Sikhism's beliefs on homosexuality?' (undated), RealSikhism website <http://realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1250025034&ucat=7> – Accessed 10 January 2012.

Yan, D. 2010, 'India gays celebrate 1 year since landmark verdict', *Associated Press*, 3 July. (CISNET India CX246010)